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Cynthia McCormick, M.D.  
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Office of Drug Evaluation II, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. McCormick:

Many of the stories crossing your desk these days may be about the negative way OxyContin has changed users' lives.

But we are writing to remind you of Oxy-Contin's power to change lives for the better.

We know well a person who suffered debilitating, near constant, pain for several years. Her life was a valiant struggle to find the strength, despite her pain, to do her work and hold onto her job (and, with it, of course, her medical insurance, but that's another story.)

Oxy-Contin has, for the past three years, made it possible for her to function with enough pain relief for her to lead a relatively normal life and advance in her profession.

Now, because of the negative publicity and the real fear physicians have of being censured for prescribing the drug, her physician is suggesting that she be "weaned" from it. But the condition that causes the pain **has not** left, and no new therapies have come along to deal with the condition. Were she to be deprived of this prescribed medicine (which she has never abused, nor, in all this time, has her dosage been increased) she would be thrown back into her former life of unremitting pain.

It would be a huge injustice if abuse of the drug by some people were to deprive pain sufferers of such a valuable medicine. Drug abusers will find something to get high on with or without OxyContin - angel dust, heroin, cocaine, alcohol. We won't "save" them by removing a legitimate drug from our nation's medicine chest.

Similarly, the few doctors who carelessly or criminally over-prescribe OxyContin need to be stopped, but not in such a way as to deprive or discourage good doctors from prescribing it responsibly.

We urge you to keep in mind the many people for whom Oxy-Contin has been a life-maker, not a life ender.

Lee and Sandra Tucci

